

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

**The claims in this listing will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.**

1-9. (Canceled)

10. (Currently Amended) A multipoint autofocus system, comprising:

a plurality of light receiving means which receive object images within a plurality of focus detection zones and perform an integration operation to integrate electric charges produced by a photoelectric conversion of optical signals of said object images;

a plurality of monitor means located adjacent to said light receiving means, for receiving and integrating said object images within said focus detection zones in real time, and for monitoring values of said electric charges that have been integrated of said corresponding light receiving means;

integration control means for stopping said integration operation of said corresponding light receiving means when said integration value monitored by said monitor means reaches a predetermined value; and

correction means for correcting said integration value of said light receiving means whose integration operation has been stopped by said integration control means, in accordance with a correction value to correct a difference in said integration value between said monitor means and said corresponding light receiving means.

11. (Original) A multipoint autofocus system according to claim 10, wherein said correction means sets said correction values of other light receiving means with reference to said light receiving means corresponding to a central focus detection zone on said image surface.

12. (Original) A multipoint autofocus system according to claim 10, wherein said predetermined value is set based on an integration value of a central monitor means which monitors a central focus detection zone, so that said integration values of said light receiving means corresponding to other monitor means can be set with reference to said central monitor means.

13. (Original) A multipoint autofocus system according to claim 10, further comprising a focus detection means for terminating said integration operation when said integration operation of all said light receiving means which have been permitted to conduct said integration operation ends, and for detecting said focus state of said focus detection zones in accordance with said integration values of said light receiving means that have been corrected by said correction means.

14. (Currently Amended) A multipoint autofocus system, comprising:  
a plurality of light receiving means which receive object images within a plurality of focus detection zones and perform an integration operation to integrate electric charges produced by a photoelectric conversion of optical signals of said object images;

counter means for counting an integration time of said light receiving means;

a plurality of monitor means adjacent to said light receiving means, for receiving and integrating said object images within said focus detection zones in real time, and for monitoring values of said electric charges that have been integrated of said corresponding light receiving means;

integration control means for stopping said integration operation of said corresponding light receiving means when said integration value monitored by said monitor means reaches a predetermined value;

gain setting means for comparing a gain of said integration value of said light receiving means that have not reached said predetermined value after a maximum integration time has lapsed, with said predetermined value that has been corrected in accordance with correction value to correct said integration value of said corresponding monitor means to thereby set said gain.

15. (Original) A multipoint autofocus system according to claim 14, wherein said integration control means varies said predetermined value stepwise after said lapse of said maximum integration time to compare said modified predetermined value with said integration value by said monitor means.

16. (Original) A multipoint autofocus system according to claim 14, wherein said gain setting means sets said gain by comparing said integration value with said

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predetermined value that has been successively corrected in accordance with said correction values to correct said integration value of said corresponding monitor means in an order of magnitude of absolute values of said correction values.

17. (Original) A multipoint autofocus system according to claim 14, wherein said integration control means compulsively stops said integration operation of all said light receiving means that have not reached said varied predetermined value.

18-21. (Canceled)

22. (New) A multipoint autofocus system according to claim 10, wherein each monitor means of said plurality of monitor means is exclusively provided for a respective corresponding light receiving means of said plurality of light receiving means.

23. (New) A multipoint autofocus system according to claim 10, wherein said plurality of light receiving means is at least three light receiving means.

24. (New) A multipoint autofocus system according to claim 10, wherein the correction value is an output ratio of said plurality of monitor means.

25. (New) A multipoint autofocus system according to claim 14, wherein each monitor means of said plurality of monitor means is exclusively provided for a respective corresponding light receiving means of said plurality of light receiving means.

26. (New) A multipoint autofocus system according to claim 14, wherein said plurality of light receiving means is at least three light receiving means.

27. (New) A multipoint autofocus system according to claim 14, wherein the correction value is an output ratio of said plurality of monitor means.

28. (New) A multipoint autofocus system, comprising:

a plurality of light receivers each configured to receive object images within a respective plurality of focus detection zones and perform an integration operation to integrate electric charges produced by a photoelectric conversion of optical signals of said object images;

a plurality of monitors, respectively located adjacent to said plurality light receivers and configured to receive and integrate said object images within said focus detection zones in real time, and further configured to monitor values of said electric charges that have been integrated of said corresponding light receivers;

an integration controller configured to stop said integration operation of said corresponding light receivers when said integration value monitored by said monitors reaches a predetermined value; and

a correction circuit configured to correct said integration value of said light receivers whose integration operation has been stopped by said integration controller, in accordance with a correction value to correct a difference in said integration value between said monitors and said corresponding light receivers.

29. (New) The multipoint autofocus system according to claim 28, wherein said correction circuit is configured to set said correction values of other light receivers with reference to said light receivers corresponding to a central focus detection zone on said image surface.

30. (New) The multipoint autofocus system according to claim 28, wherein said predetermined value is set based on an integration value of a central monitor configured to monitor a central focus detection zone, so that said integration values of said light receivers corresponding to other monitors can be set with reference to said central monitor.

31. (New) The multipoint autofocus system according to claim 28, further comprising a focus detector configured to terminate said integration operation when said integration operation of all said light receivers which have been permitted to conduct said integration operation ends, and further configured to detect said focus state of said focus detection zones in accordance with said integration values of said light receivers that have been corrected by said correction circuit.

32. (New) A multipoint autofocus system, comprising:

a plurality of light receivers configured to receive object images within a plurality of focus detection zones and perform an integration operation to integrate electric charges produced by a photoelectric conversion of optical signals of said object images;

a counter configured to count an integration time of said light receivers;

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a plurality of monitors correspondingly adjacent to said light receivers and configured to receive and integrate said object images within said focus detection zones in real time, and further configured to monitor values of said electric charges that have been integrated of said corresponding light receivers;

an integration controller configured to stop said integration operation of said corresponding light receivers when said integration value monitored by said monitors reaches a predetermined value;

a gain setter configured to compare a gain of said integration value of said light receivers that have not reached said predetermined value after a maximum integration time has lapsed, with said predetermined value that has been corrected in accordance with correction value to correct said integration value of said corresponding monitors to thereby set said gain.

33. (New) The multipoint autofocus system according to claim 32, wherein said integration controller varies said predetermined value stepwise after said lapse of said maximum integration time to compare said modified predetermined value with said integration value by said monitors.

34. (New) The multipoint autofocus system according to claim 32, wherein said gain setter is configured to set said gain by comparing said integration value with said predetermined value that has been successively corrected in accordance with said correction

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values to correct said integration value of said corresponding monitors in an order of magnitude of absolute values of said correction values.

35. (New) The multipoint autofocus system according to claim 32, wherein said integration controller is configured to compulsively stop said integration operation of all said light receivers that have not reached said varied predetermined value.

36. (New) The multipoint autofocus system according to claim 28, wherein each monitor of said plurality of monitors is exclusively provided for a respective corresponding light receiver of said plurality of light receivers.

37. (New) The multipoint autofocus system according to claim 28, wherein said plurality of light receivers is at least three light receivers.

38. (New) The multipoint autofocus system according to claim 28, wherein the correction value is an output ratio of said plurality of monitors.

39. (New) The multipoint autofocus system according to claim 32, wherein each monitor of said plurality of monitors is exclusively provided for a respective corresponding light receiver of said plurality of light receivers.

40. (New) The multipoint autofocus system according to claim 32, wherein said plurality of light receivers is at least three light receivers.

41. (New) The multipoint autofocus system according to claim 32, wherein the correction value is an output ratio of said plurality of monitors.



STATEMENT OF SUBSTANCE OF INTERVIEW

Applicants wish to thank Examiners Hannett and Vu for the telephonic interview conducted on August 20, 2004 with Applicants' representative, Attorney William Boshnick. During the interview, the applied SUZUKI reference and the above amendments to claims 10 and 14 were discussed, as well as the limitations of new claims 22-24. The Examiners indicated that the limitations of these amendments and new claims did not appear to be taught or disclosed by the applied references, but indicated that the Examiner may need to perform another search and/or further review the applied SUZUKI reference. Applicants again appreciate the Examiners' consideration and respectfully submit that all pending claims are patentable over the references of record.